

H A M M E R A N D T O N G S

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RESOLUTION ON POLITICAL ACTION AND THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

Submitted by Martin Oppenheimer

Adopted by the National Committee, December 1961

The National Committee reaffirms the statement on implementation of The Convention Statement on Political Realignment, specifically in that it recognizes that in specific instances it may be necessary or desirable for its members to work within one of the two major parties for a time. While on the one hand we do not wish to separate ourselves from those in one or another party moving in a socialist or left direction, on the other hand we must distinguish ourselves from the liberal apologists for the status quo. Support for one or another major party candidate can only be based on the fact that his candidacy represents a real break toward independent political action, away from the present two-party stalemate situation. We cannot support major party candidates, even though they may be endorsed by trade unions, if in fact a basically capitalist party supplies the issues and runs the campaign machinery. Any tactic short of this can lead only to the creation of illusions among our friends, and disillusionment and apathy among our members.

Finally, we recognize the need and emphasize the importance of Party members to work within mass or potentially mass organizations oriented towards social change. Inevitably such movements must confront the political realities of the present two-party structure and must come into conflict with it. It is our job to press for the need by such movements to engage in independent political action- independent of the present organizational machinery of the Democratic and Republican Parties. The most basic task of the Party remains in this area at this time. We stress too that working in mass movements must be a grass-roots, community level to be effective in the final analysis, and not simply a functioning as the "left tail" to the organizations of official liberalism, including the trade unions.

We reject the concept of subordinating the clear socialist position of the Party to closer collaboration with the official liberal and labor bureaucracy. Such a course would lead inevitably to the subordination of the Party's own organization, and to its ultimate liquidation. A subordination of radical demands will not lead to the radicalization necessary to enable people to break with the ideology of the military-industrial complex. We are convinced that only radical positions can lead to growth- and that only a radical strategy can bring about real solutions. We urge the membership, and our friends, at this time to consider the real potentials for political action in their localities, and to begin to lay the groundwork now for meaningful political activity.

Opening of the Resolution by Martin Oppenheimer

Not Adopted by The National Committee

Never in history has an American administration claiming to promote a "New Frontier" shown itself so quickly to be old hat. In every basic area of national and international life the Kennedy administration, elected largely on the basis of a liberal rhetoric, has in less than a single year shown itself to be grossly inadequate, disappointing and disillusioning even to many who once supported it.

In the area of social welfare, instead of challenging the reactionary coalition which has so long blocked the real needs and aspira-

tions of tens of millions of Americans, the administration has come to terms with reaction and has almost totally failed to supply leadership, not to mention results. The policy of combining guns and butter has resulted in many guns, but social welfare legislation goes hungering. The administration has steadily surrendered to the demands of the budget-minded and tax-minded corporatists, at the expense of America's real needs, even though the national budget continues to give heavier and heavier weight to the nation's war-making (and profit-making) potential.

In the field of equality of opportunity and civil rights, the administration has only reluctantly and in the face of tremendous mass pressure taken some small steps of a strictly administrative kind to assure our Negro citizens of a modicum of attention. But no new legislation has been attempted, and as a whole the administration has trodden softly indeed lest it offend the same reactionary coalition which both opposes social welfare, and every attempt to gain the full rights of citizenship for minority groups. Time after time the administration, despite its liberal phrases, has failed to speak out on behalf of the just demands of our Afro-American fellow-citizens and brothers.

The cynicism of this administration's strategy is nowhere better demonstrated than in the field of foreign relations. Beginning with the Cuban adventure, followed by the nuclear pistol-point diplomacy of Berlin, and culminating now in the resumption of underground testing (and probably, if public pressure does not suffice to prevent it, atmospheric testing) the Kennedy New Frontier has shown itself to be similar in every important respect with the brinkmanship diplomacy of Eisenhower and Dulles. Despite its rhetoric of liberalism, social reform, and the "revolution of expectations", its reply to Soviet nuclear blackmail and the Soviet Union's cynical and criminal disregard for world opinion and world health is basically to follow policies in no way different from those of the USSR.

The frustrations which have inevitably accompanied the continued failure of the administration to cope with problems both at home and abroad has given rise to a serious growth of the political right, supported by some corporations. The National Committee views this development with deep concern, and regards the failure of organized liberalism to cope with America's problems as primarily responsible.

This stalemate, and increasing drift toward the right, in American politics is politically supported by the reactionary coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans in Congress. It is aided in many states by the unrepresentative nature of ruraly-dominated state legislatures, and in the Congressional Committees by outmoded seniority systems which, lacking concentrated opposition from within the administration party, continue to cripple every real effort to legislate social change. This political coalition is responsible not only for a failure to deal with the problems facing Americans, but with the increasing power of the military-industrial complex, which permeates more and more every aspect of American Society.

In the North, the stalemate is supported by-and-large by the big city machines, which, while able to deliver huge blocs of votes in return for petty favors, cannot create the large-scale changes required to make life truly human in the big city. Such changes would force the political machines into direct opposition with the big business elements which today dominate the machines, despite their liberal and integrationist phrase-mongering.

In the face of these problems the National Committee believes that we can help break the stalemate state and assist the progressive movements that exist, small but growing, toward solutions for the crises in which American capitalism finds itself. In view of the political activity coming in the Fall of 1962 the National Committee adopts the following broad perspective:

The National Committee reaffirms the general view of the last convention that no single approach can apply to all of the U.S., and all of the circumstances of our widely scattered locals.

In some areas it may be possible for the Socialist Party to run its own candidates for Congress and other positions. But such a response should only be to a real situation, in conformity with the real resources and potentials of such an action, not merely out of a traditional emotional commitment.

In other areas the Party may be able to influence trade unionists to enter their own candidates in such a way that it will represent a truly independent break from machine politics. Or, if this is not feasible, it may be possible to run candidates on a series of other issues, such as peace, independent of the regular party organizations.

(This resolution as submitted concluded with the paragraphs adopted by the National Committee, which appear above, at the beginning of this article.)

BACKGROUND COMMENTS ON DRAFT RESOLUTION

Obviously our movement's activity is not limited to straight education about capitalism and socialism. But the desire to be relevant has led us in the past two years to two essentially sterile controversies: (1) running a presidential ticket or not, (2) political realignment versus a labor (or third) party.

We have forgotten what is the actual basis for the growth of our organization in the past three years, especially the rapid growth of our youth group - namely, the collapse of American Stalinism. Despite both its monolithism and opportunism, the American Communist Party was for 20 years the American radical ginger group. What gave it its strength was its appeal as the agent for a purported Utopia occupying one-sixth of the world; not what particular strategy it adopted in relation to the liberal and labor movements.

In a small but growing way, and imbued with democratic rather than totalitarian values, Socialists are already beginning to fulfill this role in the areas mentioned in the Draft Resolution. We will destroy what we have begun, if at this time, when 95% of the job of organizing the existing radicals into our ranks remains to be done, we shift our energies primarily to the problem of our relationship to official liberalism and to the labor leadership. There is no high-level strategy that can enable us to organize or to push the liberals today. No gimmicks of our small movement can create a militant liberal-labor coalition. But if we think such is possible, and spend our time trying out the various gimmicks, we may end up abandoning our true and possible role in the next period.

Counterposing political realignment and a labor party as conflicting perspectives, and deciding between them may be a meaningful and necessary task when there is a real socialist movement again. At the present time it is a stultifying task which removes the Party's main immediate tasks and possibilities from the center of the stage.

by SAUL MENDELSON, N.C. member, Chicago; DEBORAH MEIER, Chicago; NORMAN HILL, GEORGE RAWICK, BERNARD BOLITZER

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON PERSPECTIVES OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY DURING THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

September 1961

The first 8 months of the Kennedy Administration has quickly shown the gap between the promises of the campaign and the grossly inadequate proposals to meet the needs of the American people. In housing, education, unemployment, economic growth and civil rights, the Administration task forces clearly outlined the scope of the problems. But the proposals sent to Congress were sharply limited even before the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition cut them even further. The new administration, instead of forthrightly challenging the power of this reactionary coalition has tried to come to terms with it on domestic legislation in the interest of support for foreign policy.

Particularly outrageous is the refusal of the Administration to

support any new civil rights legislation despite all the campaign promises and the overwhelming vote of the Negro people, a vote which was decisive for Kennedy's victory. Certain administrative steps have been taken, such as a seemingly more vigorous Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities, but this is not sufficient.

The campaign of the Freedom Riders to wipe out discrimination in interstate travel has presented the challenge once more. The appeal to the Freedom Riders to stop their efforts is clearly bowing to the pressures of those who seek to delay and deny such minimal steps for equal treatment.

The Cuban adventure is the most startling example of the cynical actions of this administration. Not only did it reveal the spokesman of the U. S. Government to be barefaced liars but it betrayed the trust of the Cuban exiles who turned to the U.S. for help to overthrow the Castro dictatorship. Kennedy spoke the words of freedom and social reform and then acted to re-establish a conservative, if not reactionary, regime in Cuba.

Many liberals genuinely believed the promises of the New Frontier, and eagerly looked to 100 days of social legislation to meet pressing domestic and international problems. While it is refreshing to have an administration more aware of the problems of the world and more representative of liberal, labor and civil rights sentiment, the New Frontier is following in the old mold of compromise on important domestic legislation and adherence to the interests of the "military-industrial complex" in foreign policy. At one and the same time, it raises the promise of social reform, uses the language of the rising revolution of expectations, and then urges greater military power to meet the thrust of Communism. But the Cuban adventure showed that, at bottom, despite the rhetoric of liberalism and social reform, U.S. foreign policy will not differ significantly from what it was under Truman and Eisenhower.

The stalemate of U.S. politics is threatened by both the forces for progress and the forces for reaction. The most dynamic progressive movement is the developing Negro struggle for first class citizenship and human dignity. On the reactionary side, there is the John Birch Society, reflecting middle-class bewilderment toward the revolutionary struggles of our time and the challenge of Communism.

Domestic reform legislation is effectively blocked in Congress by the reactionary coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans, and in many states by the unrepresentative character of the rural dominated legislatures. Whether there is a Democratic or Republican majority, most important Congressional committees are dominated by the conservatives of both parties. And long experience has shown that compromise, as Kennedy has done, only emboldens the coalition.

But there are other stalemates in American politics which distort our political climate into a conservative shape unable to meet the challenge of the 20th Century. Foreign policy under both Democratic and Republican administration, has been decisively shaped by military considerations, and only secondarily by political considerations, to meet the revolutionary changes taking place in the former colonial and semi-colonial world. Here is the power of the "military-industrial complex," and those who are committed to the defense of capitalism in an era of revolutionary change. Nothing better illustrates the overall conservative character of the power elite in the U.S. And

political parties committed, at best, to extremely modest reforms in the U.S. can hardly deal sympathetically with nations and peoples in the process of vast revolutionary upheavals.

However there are other forms of the political stalemate. For the Negro in the North, the stalemate is focused in the big city political machines, and the non-legal, but nevertheless real institutionalized racism in the North. The developing Negro consciousness, education and economic power, as well as considerations of foreign policy have forced the enactment of FEPC and fair housing legislation in many states. But the basic reality remains despite these advances.

For liberal and labor forces in the north, the stalemate is not only in the rural-dominated state legislatures but in the conservative Democratic machines. These machines have not dealt with the problems of the urban areas. They speak the language of liberalism and deliver the vote of the workers, Negroes and liberals, but they live in an easy alliance with the dominant business interests.

Policy for the SP has to start not only from an awareness of the various forms of the political stalemate but from the size and strength of the organized democratic socialist movement. Our main concern is to involve the members of the Party in the various organizations which already exist and which are devoted to limited goals. We want to increase participation and activity in labor unions, civil rights organizations, peace organizations, various political groupings - such as the ADA, Liberal Party, reform Democratic Party clubs, and community organizations concerned with specific local problems such as school integration, urban renewal, etc. The Party must seek ways of assisting its members in these activities, and utilizing its resources to coordinate and strengthen these various efforts. Right now the Party and its members have only peripheral involvement and influence in these organizations and movements.

We should particularly emphasize, where possible, those dynamic organizations that are formally politically non-partisan. We urge this not because of their "neutrality" but because they represent a more radical response to American society. The growth and strengthening of these "peripheral" groups is essential to any longer range radicalization in America. Furthermore the active people in these movements constitute the bulk of the involved radicals in this country today. It is amongst these people that the Socialist Party can find potential members today. They are the people who do not need to be convinced of the desirability of either realignment or a third party. They usually vote Democratic, but what they do on the other 364 days of the year represents the sum total of those activities in which a growing Socialist Party would be a unifying and synthesizing force.

We are referring specifically to the following activities which either clash with the major trend of official liberalism or which press it from the left with their more militant approach:

1. The peace movement: SANE, which in the past year has taken the first distinct steps toward broadening its concern from nuclear policy alone to all aspects of democratic foreign policy; the American Friends Service Committee, with its peace marches and its increasingly successful labor conferences; the Student Peace Union, which has spread to many campuses.
2. The direct action civil rights movement: CORE, Freedom Riders, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and similar independent local groups.
3. Groups struggling for democracy in the trade union movement.
4. The Negro American Labor Council, which reinforces the direct action civil rights movement, but also serves to advance the cause of trade union democracy on a basis of racial equality.

In the past both the advocates of realignment and the advocates of a labor (or third) Party have tended to exaggerate their relevance to the immediate day-to-day life of our movement. Granted that these are important and highly desirable developments, it is a mistake to think that advocacy of them by the small socialist movement is either in any way central to our present appeal, or that it can significantly affect the possibility of either goals coming to fruition. Furthermore such an emphasis is a deterrent to our growth in this period. For it is a fact that the youth are growing at a far more rapid rate than the Party, because youth who have arrived at a radical social outlook are readier to commit themselves in accordance with their principles to a small organization. Any attempt to make political realignment the major emphasis of our activity will contribute to liquidating our youth support, which is the most promising source at this time for future militant Socialist participation in all arenas of American life.

To sum up our political perspectives and our orientation during the Kennedy administration:

1. We represent as a Party a fundamentally different approach to the problems of society. We are not, in other words, the left wing of the Kennedy administration.

2. We would welcome realignment of the present two-party system as a decisive step forward in American politics. We welcome activity by liberal Democrats aimed at getting their Party to carry out the liberal planks contained in the Democratic Party platform. Members of the Socialist Party are free to participate in efforts at change within the Democratic Party. The Socialist Party today, for reasons detailed above, does not emphasize such arenas, but neither does it exclude the possibility that in some locales these types of reform Clubs can provide a meaningful year-round center for political activity on neighborhood, local and national issues.

3. We do not exclude a turn of events sometimes in the future that would result in a mass liberal-labor "third" party, which we would of course welcome. Where local independent liberal or labor political action is possible on a mass scale, Socialists should participate. At the present time, considering our own weakness and our still peripheral relationship with the liberal, labor and civil rights arenas, it would be incorrect for us to emphasize initiatives on our part for this purpose.

4. Socialist candidates should be put forward where a serious campaign is assured, and where a significant response is likely. We should not run candidates merely as a gesture on behalf of our principles, thus demonstrating our weakness and convincing the people we most want to influence of our sectarianism.

5. What we should emphasize is that our proposals for a new society are accompanied by an unceasing effort at participation in all the areas of social concern where significant radical and militant activity is being carried on, with the immediate objective of making our party the assembling point of American democratic radicalism. Only then can the question of the Socialist Party's intervention in reorganizing American political party life become a serious and significant debate.

BOULDER RESOLUTION ON "SOCIAL" DEFENSE

1. The Soviet testing of over 30 nuclear devices since September 1, the projected atmospheric testing of U.S. weapons, and the obvious inadequacy of private of "do-it-yourself" fall-out shelters raise the need for a truly national civil defense program.

2. Such a program to be meaningful must comprise a multi-billion dollar federally sponsored shelter construction approach which will extend into every community and neighborhood in the country.

3. This construction program requires top priority to protect the population as quickly as possible from the effect of nuclear devices and their testing.

4. This kind of program needs also to be accompanied by the dissemination of complete information on the genetic and biological destructiveness of nuclear bombs as well as their explosive and fire-storm effects.

5. The program demands furthermore a reorganization of civil defense, so as to involve the population as full participants (with the British Home Guard as its possible model), instead of becoming a military, regimented organizational basis for garrison-state developments.

6. Such a federally financed program on a massive scale must be designed to undercut the problem of permanent unemployment by tying it to school, public and federal housing and turning these programs into multiple purpose constructions which will include the building and stocking of deep underground shelters for community use.

7. The reluctance of political leaders in Washington to act on such a program, despite their personal alarm over the consequences of nuclear weapons, prompts the SP-SDF - in line with its general and political orientation - to call upon the trade unions, liberal organizations, humanitarian and religious groups, and others to join in common action to apply mass political pressure for the enactment of this kind of program - a social defense program.

ARGUMENT FOR THE BOULDER RESOLUTION ON "SOCIAL" DEFENSE

The problem of Civil Defense has been raised with increased urgency because of political developments in the last few months. The mounting tension of the Berlin crisis, the Soviet testing of over 30 nuclear devices, and the possibility of American resumption of atmospheric testing have all contributed to a widespread public concern with questions of fallout and civilian defense. Washington officials, mass circulation magazines, and many other organizations and individuals have concerned themselves with the need for a civilian defense and fallout protection program. While we agree that there is a great need for such protection, we feel that most official proposals which have been made are seriously inadequate or misconceived.

The basic fault of these proposals is that they call for privately financed, individual fallout shelters and survival equipment - including even warning signals - which not only would create social and economic inequality of protection but also would result in technically insufficient protection even for those few fortunate enough to have access to such facilities.

Specifically, our objections to the present Civil Defense situation and to such proposals for future Civil Defense are:

A. Private fallout shelters introduce social, economic, geographic, and occupational inequalities in protection. Such inequali-

ties stem from differences in availability of money and time, and in access to space and information needed for construction for private fallout shelters; public or private institutional development of facilities to shelter government, business and military officials, and the futility and impossibility of building such shelters in densely populated areas.

B. Private fallout shelters cannot meet the technical demands of population protection in a thermonuclear age. At best they provide only short-term protection from fallout and almost no protection from other dangers of nuclear attack - blast, heat, ground shock, firestorms and the like. In addition they isolate small groups of people in a situation of social disorganization - breakdown of utilities, failure of communication, anarchic and criminal developments, need for medical and other specialized services, and shortages of essential supplies and equipment.

The obvious demand of a nuclear world is for extensive, socialized, publicly financed, and technically sound protection from nuclear dangers.

Only large-scale shelters can be built to withstand the more serious effects of modern war. Large shelters can be built far underground and with great structural strength, and can include technical devices for air and waterpurification - providing considerable protection from all or most physical effects of nuclear attack, and even from chemical or biological warfare.

The requirements for subsistence under conditions of nuclear warfare - maintenance of communication and utilities, provision of special services, and the preparatory stockpiling of supplies and equipment - can only be met by large-scale, coordinated efforts.

Only in large shelters can a reasonable degree of social organization be maintained. Such organization will be essential to keep order, bolster morale, and deal with problems of immediate rescue and long-range reconstruction.

The only humane and moral approach to civilian defense is an attempt to offer equal opportunity of protection to everyone. This is impossible if defense is a private affair - even among public officials. Large-scale, socialized facilities are an indispensable condition for equality of protection.

The need for protection fulfilling the above conditions is obvious. It is equally apparent that meeting such a need requires a society-wide effort. That kind of effort can only be organized and financed on a national level, by the federal government. It is in fact the duty of the federal government in fulfilling its Constitutional obligation to:

PROVIDE FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE, PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE AND SECURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY TO OURSELVES AND OUR POSTERITY.

In our nuclear age, this means Social Defense from nuclear disaster.

We therefore call for a multi-billion dollar federal Civil Defense program, including construction of large-scale shelters, and extending into every community and neighborhood in the country.

This program should be given top priority, with the objective of protecting the population from the effects of nuclear warfare and nuclear testing to the greatest possible extent and within the shortest possible time.

The program should be accompanied by the collection and distribution of complete information on the hazards of a nuclear age and the

possibilities of protection from them. Such information must include estimates of the extent and kind of destruction expected in the event of war, estimates of the consequences of nuclear testing for this and future generations, and plans for minimizing such dangers.

Finally, the program must be accompanied by a complete reorganization of Civil Defense that would involve the entire population as participants. (The English Home Guard of World War Two might be used as a model of such involvement.) This kind of participation would put Civil Defense out of the hands of incompetents and alarmists. Further, it would reduce the tendency for Civil Defense to become an instrument of militarization or regimentation.

Clearly, to move the federal government to adopt such a program will require action by many organizations and individuals - especially trade unions, religious and humanitarian associations, and political groups.

However, the proposed program and actions will meet with opposition from those who contend that Civil Defense is not worthwhile, impossible or actually harmful.

Among arguments against extended civilian defense are those which say that it would be more effort than it is worth - too expensive, too disruptive, too unlikely ever to be needed, and so forth.

Although these arguments are legitimate and deserve consideration, their force is greatly diminished by the very fact of the widespread concern over civilian defense which now exists. People who make or influence political decisions should not gauge the cost of a program by its absolute expense, but rather by the relative value attached to it by those to whom they are politically responsible. Moreover, Civil Defense is one of those things which is vastly more costly to need and not have than to have and not need.

Another kind of argument contends that Civil Defense cannot be made effective enough to be useful. (Too few lives could be saved; no shelters we now have would really give protection; and so on.) However, not only is a rather small increase in the number of lives saved worth an enormous increase in the expense and effort put forth to protect them, but also it is quite likely that with sufficient effort, the technology of protection can begin to match the technology of destruction.

A more pernicious set of arguments is presented by those who contend that Civil Defense is antithetical to "Peace", and especially by those who advocate unilateralist solutions to the problem of Peace. These include not only extremists from various "Peace" movements, but also those who proclaim "Better Red than dead," those who are apologists for the Soviet Union, and those who are simply looking for an easy way out of circumstances requiring complicated analysis and planning.

The basic argument of the "Peace" minded grouping is termed the War Psychology argument. Their contention is that even to talk about, let alone to try to provide adequate civilian defense is to delude the population into believing that it is protected from the dangers of nuclear war - a delusion which, it is thought, will lead the population to a willingness to engage in such a war. Those who advocate civilian defense therefore become villains, militarists, warmongers - in short, Devils.

The proponents of the War Psychology argument presumptuously assume that the people are capable of being manipulated by mere words and symbols either into favoring war or into opposing war. The interests of this elite of "Peace" are in manipulating people by mere words into opposing war. They assume that others (militarists, reactionaries, and advocates of civilian defense) are attempting to manipulate people by mere words into favoring war - and that they are

succeeding.

Nowhere do such elitists admit that the people can tell the difference between what is real and what is simply fakery.

We believe that the populace can see the immense difference between, say, having a knight's armor against a jousting lance and having even the best shelters against thermonuclear war. It is the elitists who have been fooled by their own words, noise, and irrelevant analogies into opposing such necessary measures as civilian defense.

Since the development of an adequate program of civilian defense would precisely involve increasing the population's awareness of the dangers of nuclear war, it is an elitist assumption of the worst sort which claims that the same awareness which makes pacifists anti-war would make the populace pro-war.

Moreover, these "Peace"-mongers are often profoundly anti-human in that they are normally not at all concerned with saving human lives - unless they can save all human lives. They assume that the only alternatives in the world situation are either/or dichotomies:

either the millennium of "Peace", or Armageddon
either total salvation, or total destruction
either surrender, or suicide
either Red, or dead.

In their attempts to manipulate people into the most absolute opposition to war, they feel compelled to declare that if war comes, none shall survive; all shall die. The logic of the self-fulfilling prophecy is apparent here: they must oppose precisely those measures which will permit some to survive - civilian defense.

In the foggy world of this kind of "humanism" and "morality", we find those who express condemnation and horror at the existence of persons who are willing to contend that there is a difference between the deaths of 130 million people and, say, 50 million; of 40 million and, say, 30 million.

Discussions of such differences are indeed grotesque, yet in our world and time, we are compelled to consider them. Cool-headedness should not be confused with cold-bloodedness.

It should be realized as well that making efforts toward saving lives in the event of nuclear war in no way precludes making efforts toward avoiding nuclear war entirely. Of course efforts to prevent nuclear war should be made. However, in politics, as in all human endeavors, even one's best efforts may fail. Good intentions are insufficient; exemplary actions do not necessarily produce the intended results; and even the most careful calculation may be mistaken.

If for any calculable or incalculable reason nuclear war does occur, it is essential that as many people as possible have adequate protection. That kind of protection is only possible through the prior organization of the extensive socialized defense system we are proposing.

By ordinary logic, those who wanted to oppose civilian defense would have to contend either that thermonuclear war is impossible or that saving human lives is not worth while. Yet it is exactly those who counterpose "Peace" to civilian defense who contend that nuclear war is almost inevitable, and that the most likely causes of war will be irrationality, insanity, or accident - causes which could hardly be eliminated by any of the activities they are proposing.

The righteous gestures (demonstrations, petitions, and "Peace" marches) of those opposing both civilian defense and the existence of

nuclear weapons often are nothing but arguments for their alleged purity of heart. Frequently an admitted cynicism about their own ineffectiveness pervades extreme pacifist, unilateral disarmament, and anti-civilian defense movements. Such cynical activity is a symptom of the politics of despair and the politics of personal salvation. It is doubtful that activities of this nature will have much effect on public policy; and it is also doubtful that the proposals made by those so acting are either possible or desirable.

Although the opposition to civilian defense of those who have a single-minded approach to "Peace" is disreputable enough, there is another source of opposition which is positively vicious. This rejection of appropriate Civil Defense comes from those who are opposed to the social and economic changes required by a large-scale protection program - the Right, and especially the radical Right. Their unwillingness to permit increased taxes or large federal programs and probably even their desire to keep the presently neglected Civil Defense program in reactionary hands - not to mention their existing interests in the profits of private, free-enterprise shelters - these are the narrow, profoundly anti-human sources of their opposition. Their arguments will ring with right-wing demagogery, but be in obvious contradiction to their professed dedication to the United States Constitution.

Yet neither demonstrations nor demagogery can eliminate the hazards of the nuclear age. It is not possible to sweep science and technology under a rug. It is, in fact, probable that the world will have to live with nuclear technology, nuclear weapons, and the risk of nuclear war for a very long time. Civilian defense would be necessary even if only the present cold-war context were considered; but the need for protection is not limited to that context; it is a long-range and increasing need.

The case for a strong Civil Defense program can stand on its own merits in terms of the need to provide insurance against the effect of possible nuclear war. Still, it could be argued that even so we might not want to face the extensive social consequences of such a program.

A number of the predictable consequences, however, are actually desirable, particularly from the standpoint of liberal, labor, and socialist objectives.

Large underground shelter complexes can be made to serve a variety of purposes in addition to their function as shelters; for example, in the decentralization of publically sponsored industrial development, or as any of the now badly needed public buildings - schools, hospitals, and even housing. This kind of development could greatly stimulate municipal planning - a much needed activity, as our tangled cities show. To give a single other example of problems which could be alleviated by this program: the blatant waste of food and money involved in the problem of agricultural surpluses could be reduced by processing and storing surpluses in usable form as part of shelter provisions.

An extensive, multi-purpose public construction program of the kind needed would create large numbers of jobs, not only in the program itself but also in providing the necessary resources. In the face of widespread permanent unemployment and periodic economic recessions, this is clearly needed.

The increase in expenditure on publically financed construction which this social defense program will require would be an important contribution to the kind of social legislation thought desirable by the Left, and will be a substantial addition to the public sector of the economy.

The fact that such social consequences flow from an adequate civilian defense program, not only makes it more desirable in terms of liberal, labor, and socialist politics, but also means that a considerable shift in American politics would have to take place in order to make the necessary legislation possible. This is by no means impossible. In fact, since there is widespread and growing support in the population for the civilian defense measures, this might be just the issue which could add enough impetus to effect a restructuring of American politics.

Many organizations - trade unions, religious and humanitarian associations, political groups, etc. - will have to support this program if it is to become a reality; and they will benefit as organizations by serving as channels for the expression and implementation of public desire for effective Civil Defense.

We therefore call for the assignment of highest priority to the creation of a large-scale, public, socialized, multi-purpose program of Civil Defense, and we urge other organizations and individuals to join in common action to apply mass political pressure for the immediate adoption of such a program.

BOULDER LOCAL

Yet neither demonstrations nor demands can eliminate the hazards of the future. It is not possible to sweep science and technology under a rug. It is in fact such that the world will have to live with nuclear technology, nuclear weapons, and the risk of nuclear war for a very long time. Civilian defense would be necessary even if only the present cold-war context were considered; but the need for protection is not limited to that context; it is a long-range and increasing need.

In the case for a strong Civil Defense program, we stand on its own merits in terms of the need to provide insurance against the effects of possible nuclear war. Still, it could be argued that even so we might not want to face the extensive social consequences of such a program. A number of the predictable consequences, however, are actually desirable, particularly from the standpoint of liberal, labor, and socialist objectives.

Large underground shelter complexes can be made to serve a variety of purposes in addition to their function as shelters for civilians in the event of nuclear attack. They can be used for industrial development, or as any of the new kind of public buildings - schools, hospitals, and even housing. This kind of development could greatly stimulate municipal planning - a much needed activity, as our tangled cities show. To give a simple example of problems which could be alleviated by this program: the slanting waste of food and money involved in the practice of purchasing surplus food to be re-worked by processing and storing surplus in usable form as part of shelter provisions.

An extensive, multi-purpose public construction program of the kind needed would create large unskilled jobs, not only in the program itself but also in providing the necessary resources. In the face of widespread permanent unemployment and periodic economic recessions, this is clearly needed.

The increase in expenditure on publically financed construction which this social defense program will require would be an important contribution to the kind of social legislation thought desirable by the public. It will be a substantial addition to the public sector of the economy.

THE PARTY AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

Defeated by the National Committee; Philadelphia, June '61)

The campaign of the Freedom Riders to wipe out segregation in the south and the campaign of persecution against them reveals anew the essence of the political crisis in the United States. The people of the United States are predominantly represented by the labor movement, the civil rights movements and liberals both organized and unorganized. They have clearly expressed their sentiments on a whole series of vital questions. They have stated them unmistakably, even if by a narrow majority, in the election of John F. Kennedy as president and in the return of a Democratic majority in both houses. Nevertheless the frustration of the popular will continues to both in the legislature and the country and in the streets of the cities of the United States, particularly in the south. The principle reason for this is contained in the effective domination of our political life by a coalition of reactionary Democrats and Republicans. Their power to flaunt the popular will is not diminished in any serious degree by the fact that they form an unofficial coalition which does not dare to present itself for endorsement in the elections.

The Freedom Riders are doing nothing more than asserting the rights of the Negro people of the south to social equality which the whole system of segregation denies them. These rights were solemnly pledged by the platform adopted by the Democratic Party at its Los Angeles convention, by the candidates who ran on this platform in the last election. They have been affirmed by decisions just as solemnly made and reiterated by the Supreme Court of the United States. Those who are engaged in persecuting, hounding, suppressing and jailing the Freedom Riders are not simply reactionaries in general; they are not simply violators of the decisions of the Supreme Court; they are also the official representatives and spokesmen for the Democratic Party throughout the south. Trying to mediate between those who are working to implement the law of the land and those who are insolently violating the law is the representative of the Administration at the head of the Justice Department. He is bound by the law of the land and by the pledges of his Democratic Party, yet he calls upon the Freedom Riders to desist from the exercise of their elementary democratic rights.

It is impossible for the United States to make the economic, political, and social progress, now more urgently needed than ever before, and to make this progress not only inside the United States but on the critical international field, unless the labor, liberal, and civil rights movements coalesce their efforts as quickly as possible to overcome the reactionary coalition whose domination of the government has been primarily responsible for our political crisis.

The SP-SDF has proclaimed with the greatest earnestness the urgent need for a new political alignment. The failure of the progressive political forces in this country to take speedy and energetic measures toward bringing such a realignment into existence has served to perpetuate the state of stagnation in our economic and political life at home and thereby has also contributed to the increasingly critical situation of the democratic movements and hopes throughout the world.

The best that can be said of the new administration since it took office at the beginning of this year is that it has sought to placate at one and the same time the reactionary elements in its own party still cynically

allied with their similars in the Republican Party, and at the same time to conciliate those who are genuinely committed to a program of economic and social progress. It was a foregone conclusion that any attempt to placate such unreconcilable forces could produce only what it has produced: the conspicuous failure to achieve even those modest goals set forth both in the Los Angeles Democratic platform and in the task force proposals of the new administration. Where bold strides forward are required on such problems as peace, disarmament, unemployment, automation, economic growth and civil rights, there has been at most a halting and trivial toddling. On the whole the measures passed and proposed are utterly inadequate. The pitiable compromises offered by the White House on its own legislative proposals, far from appeasing the reactionary Dem.-Republican coalition have only served to embolden them and to harden their resistance to social change.

A new political party is absolutely essential. The SP-SDF recognizes, however, that it cannot be created overnight. Further, it recognizes that such a party cannot be created by the efforts of socialists alone. Indeed it recognizes that a new party composed only of socialists could not under present circumstances meet the urgent requirements of the day. It is mainly for that reason that the SP-SDF feels that the main responsibility rests precisely on the shoulders of the labor, liberal and civil rights movements who express the best and most far-sighted interests of the American people.

We recognize that these movements are today allied with or give their support largely to the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. It is both the task and the duty of these movements, even if they do not yet agree on the need to form a new party to take those steps required to achieve the democratic will of the American people by breaking the strength of the reactionary coalition. To reduce this reactionary coalition to its real position as a minority, a counter-coalition must be organized. Its program in the beginning need be nothing more than the program to which the labor, liberal and civil rights movements are already committed. But to realize this program requires first of all to break the stranglehold of the reactionaries and southern Democrats on the Democratic Party and, through it, the houses of Congress.

We therefore call upon all labor and liberals in the Democratic Party to repudiate by word and deed the reactionary southern Democrats. We call likewise upon labor and liberals in the Republican Party to dissociate themselves completely from the dominant reactionary wing of their own party which has maintained a shameful alliance with the southern Democrats.

Such outstanding persecutors of the Freedom Riders as Governor Patterson of Alabama and Governor Barnett of Mississippi are flouters of the elementary principles of democracy and decency and must be explicitly repudiated by all those in the Democratic Party who are committed to the Party platform.

The Democratic National Committee which has been so inexcusably silent about the shameful conduct of its spokesmen in the south must be called upon to take a clear cut stand. Silence or equivocation about this international scandal cannot be tolerated in any political body in this country.

But this appeal for clear-cut words and deeds cannot be made only to the official representatives of the present political parties. The people of the United States expressed their political sentiments in the last presidential election. We do not believe that the political activities

of the people of this country come to an end with the election of a president and a congress. Politics is a year 'round occupation and duty of every citizen. No genuinely democratic political movement is worthy of the name unless it is a grass roots movement, organized in every city, town and hamlet of the country.

The SP-SDF is ready and eager to cooperate selflessly with all labor, liberal and civil rights groups to establish the basis for the political coalition in every locality in the country, no matter on how modest a basis the beginning is made. In this beginning the SP-SDF pledges its loyal solidarity, since it seeks no narrow partisan advantage but aims above all things to help bring about the new political alignment in the United States. The SP-SDF is prepared to cooperate with and support all serious forces, both inside and outside the Democratic Party in waging a struggle to isolate and defeat all reactionary elements, again be they inside or outside the Democratic Party. The reactionaries must be challenged not only in elections but in primaries. No election or primary campaign anywhere in the country should be allowed to pass without the progressive forces challenging their political enemies every step of the way and on every level; both inside the existing parties and in the elections themselves.

Everyone to whom life and liberty are dear and who gives our problems serious thought must be aware, as socialists are aware, that never in its history has the United States faced so grave a political crisis at home and abroad. It is no exaggeration to say that the entire globe is gripped by forces of revolution or by forces of counter-revolution. The United States calls itself the leader of the free world. The tragic truth is that it has been unable to offer leadership, that it has been unable to advance the cause of freedom. That is the story of the United States in recent times and up to now. It will continue to be the case and even grow worse unless we in this country take the initiative for a radical change. In a world yearning for change we condemn ourselves to futility and defeat if we seek only to maintain things as they are. We Socialists are not visionaries who believe that all that needs to be changed will be changed overnight. But a beginning in the direction of change must be made immediately and it must be a bold and radical beginning.

The beginning which is the prerequisite for coming to grips effectively both with domestic and international problems bears the name: a new political alignment in the United States. None of the pressing and critical problems that now demand solution -- mass un-employment, the housing crisis, the crisis in education, in transportation, in medicine and health, the decay of our cities, our stagnating economy, automation -- can be dealt with effectively when the political life of our country is strangled by the old outmoded reactionary political coalition that dominates our lives.

We are Socialists. We have neither the need nor the desire to conceal our belief that the big problems of today can be resolved durably only by a complete transformation of the very basis of our society, by the introduction of social ownership, democratic control and democratic planning. We support wholeheartedly all legislation or any other measures which, while not themselves socialist, facilitate the realization of our ideals. But it is not this ideal which is in the minds of the millions upon millions who make up the progressive forces in this country. It is with them that we seek honest collaboration in the advancement of all those economic and political social forward steps for which we feel a common need.

The American people have overcome grave political crises in the past.

The one we face now, we repeat, is the gravest of all. If we succeed in resolving it not only the United States but the entire world will be able to move forward to security, to prosperity, to peace, to liberty. The forces in the United States already committed to these goals are ample in number and strength to realize them. Let them unite to break the political grip of the dead hand that holds us back.

THE PARTY AND THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

Sam Bottone

(Defeated by the National Committee; Philadelphia, June 1961)

The first 5 months of the Kennedy Administration has quickly shown the gap between the promises of the campaign and the grossly inadequate proposals to meet the needs of the American people. In housing, education, unemployment, economic growth and civil rights, the Administration task forces clearly outlined the scope of the problems. But the proposals sent to Congress were sharply limited even before the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition cut them even further. The new administration instead of forthrightly challenging the power of this reactionary coalition has tried to come to terms with it on domestic legislation in the interest of support for foreign policy.

Particularly outrageous is the refusal of the Administration to support any new civil rights legislation despite all the campaign promises and the overwhelming vote of the Negro people, a vote which was decisive for Kennedy's victory. Certain administrative steps have been taken, such as a seemingly more vigorous Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities, but this is not sufficient.

The campaign of the Freedom Riders to wipe out discrimination in interstate travel has presented the challenge once more. The appeal to the Freedom Riders to stop their efforts is clearly bowing to the pressures of those who seek to delay and deny such minimal steps for equal treatment.

The Cuban adventure is the most startling example of the cynical actions of this administration. Not only did it reveal the spokesmen of the U.S. government to be barefaced liars but it betrayed the trust of the Cuban exiles who turned to the U.S. for help to overthrow the Castro dictatorship. Kennedy spoke the words of freedom and social reform and then acted to re-establish a conservative, if not reactionary, regime in Cuba.

Many liberal genuinely believed the promises of the New Frontier, and eagerly looked to a 100 days of social legislation to meet pressing domestic and international problems. While it is refreshing to have an administration more aware of the problems of the world and more representative of liberal, labor, and civil rights sentiment, the New Frontier is following in the old mold of compromise on important domestic legislation and adherence to the interests of the "military-industrial complex" in foreign policy. At one and the same time, it raises the promise of social reform, uses the language of the rising revolution of expectations, and then urges greater military power to meet the thrust of communism. But the Cuban adventure showed that, at bottom, despite the rhetoric of liberalism and social reform, U.S. foreign policy will not differ significantly from what it was under Truman and Eisenhower.

The stalemate of U.S. politics is threatened by both the forces for progress and the forces for reaction. The most dynamic progressive movement is the developing Negro struggle for first class citizenship and human dignity. On the reactionary side, there is the John Birch Society, reflecting middle-class bewilderment toward the revolutionary struggles of our time and the challenge of Communism.

Domestic reform legislation is effectively blocked in Congress by the reactionary coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans, and in many

For the first time in sixty years, the SP did not present or support a candidate for President. This decision, though unavoidable, raises serious problems for the future existence of Socialist organization in the United States

Our basic theoretical framework was one of political realignment. This meant a fight for a democratic party without the South and committed to a program at least as liberal as the 1960 platform. A realistic view of Democratic party developments indicate that the slim Kennedy victory and Party tradition has reinforced the coalition of Southern Democrats and big city bosses, leaving the handful of liberal congressmen in a difficult position. Instead of a militant fight for a truly liberal labor coalition, we have a hodge-podge of accommodation and compromise.

The official labor movement recuperating from an electoral victory has neither the strength nor the initiative to lead the fight for the implementation of a program and has settled for some small advances in minimum wage, aid to depressed areas, federal aid to education, increased unemployment benefits and a start at an urban renewal program.

Meanwhile, basic issues of war or peace, civil rights, civil liberties, permanent unemployment and a stagnant economy go unanswered.

The SP has rejected as the road to isolation the basically negative attitude of the thirties. The program of the liberals in Congress, no matter how inadequate, has real merit and should be supported as far as it goes.

What then is the role of the Socialist Party toward the New Frontier? As a left ADA working almost completely within the frame of reference of the liberal Congressional bloc and the trade union leadership, it is relegated to the uninspiring choice of better or worse compromises.

The maintenance of a Socialist label for our Party makes the decision easier. If we want to go the ADA route, we should abandon the SP label and try to be as effective as possible through local Democratic clubs and COPE in working for better compromises within the two party structure.

The advantage of maintaining a Socialist label and program is precisely that it separates us from dependence upon the realistic alternatives in Democratic party politics.

America is the one country in the world where a Socialist label is a liability in terms of public acceptance. This is not our weakness -- it is our strength. The Socialist Party, if it is to have a role and grow, must remain an organization of radical discontent. This does not mean a sterile loyalty to worn-out dogma. It means that the party must become a center for those who do not accept the lib-lab compromises as the best that can be achieved and are impressed with the poverty of new ideas in the old parties. We must not repeat the errors of the thirties and isolate ourselves, in effect, from the struggle for immediate social and economic advances. We should look to the future of our Party as a radical haven that while supporting immediate demands also is concerned with long range programs of basic social reconstruction.

A radical party has other arenas to work in. Our immediate arena is the struggle of organizations dedicated to direct action on immediate issues and educational groups working in the arena of ideas. The issue groups include organizations like Southern Student Leadership Conference, CORE, NAACP, NALC, the Puerto Rican, Mexican, Jewish, American Indian and other minority groups. Our activities through SANE, ACLU, WDL, AFSC, all emphasize the fight for

social justice.

In labor, it is not enough to oppose anti-labor legislation and support the economic demands of unions. We should support the fight of workers everywhere for democratic rights, even in those cases where the union hierarchy itself is the culprit.

A radical party supports the individual against the machine, fights for the rights of non-conformity, is opposed to the abuses of bureaucracy. In a word, it is concerned first with people and their needs, and puts these needs before the needs of the institution, whether it be the state, a corporation, or a union.

We are concerned with the corrosive effect of mass culture and the tendencies towards conformity and centralization in our society. We believe that to be radical is to go to the root and that the root is man.

Many of our friends in the top grade union leadership and their technicians may part company with us when we refuse to accept the rules of the game of big institutions jockeying for power. We are concerned with human freedom, and do not accept a welfare state structure that submerges freedom. We feel the need for cultural diversity as a matter of principle and support conditions that encourage intellectual ferment in society.

Our tendency has an appeal not so much to the social engineers who work in the manipulative atmosphere of big institutions -- but in the areas of ideas and values where tens of thousands are searching for answers to the problem of man in a mass society.

We are not for rejecting practical politics. We are for going beyond its limits working in the arena of ideas on campuses, and in the intellectual community and in the world of struggle where the sit-in or the direct action group is making its impact.

The major area of Socialist effort is in precisely these areas. Our party has the talents, tradition and potential to make a substantial contribution in the world of ideas and the arena of struggle and issue groups. It would be a tragedy to dissipate our assets by letting our people become wholly immersed in old party politics. To the extent we build cadres of capable people -- to that extent the American Socialist organization will be in a position to play a roll in the years ahead and be taken seriously.

To the extent we try to convince our lib-lab friends that we really are quite harmless -- to this extent we will be treated with contempt.

by Alex Wollod

I am wholeheartedly in favor of the document entitled "Toward Political Realignment in America - A Socialist Declaration" adopted at our 1960 convention. Unfortunately, the manner in which the convention recorded itself in favor of this turn remains much to be desired. The February issue of "Hammer and Tongs" carried a statement entitled "Toward Political Realignment" which I presume was discussed by our locals. This statement despite any of its shortcomings was a resolution which could be debated prior to the convention and amended, and then be voted on at the convention. The delegates at the convention were confronted not with this statement, but with a statement which they had not read, let alone not having debated it, and essentially a public relations statement and which could for all practical purposes not be amended. As a public statement of the views of our organization, it is more than adequate. The delegates, however, should have had before them either the statement in the February issue of "Hammer and Tongs" or another resolution which the comrades should have had an opportunity to discuss prior to the convention. The statement "Toward Political Realignment - A Socialist Declaration" adopted by the convention should have been adopted by the National Committee or a subcommittee of the National Committee after the convention recorded itself in favor of the realignment concept as embodied in the type of statement or resolution carried in the February issue of "Hammer and Tongs". If this procedure would have been followed, I'm convinced that the "statement to Party locals" would either have not been carried or perhaps would not have been introduced in the first place. The debate would certainly have been more meaningful. The majority of the delegates who voted for the "statement to Party locals" were not happy with it, disagreed with it in part, but voted for it because they did not have a resolution before them in the sense I have tried to outline. The majority of the comrades wanted to record themselves in favor of maintaining a balance between work in the Democratic Party, and the independence of the Party structure, etc. The sponsors of the "statement to Party locals" are in another category. They are riding two horses. It is extremely important to them that they be classified as left wing. In order to accomplish this, one reads the following from their statement: We maintain that a Labor Party perspective is not outmoded, as some believe, but on the contrary has been proved to be a REAL factor in American political life by the recent proposals for independent political action, coming from some unions that are fed up with the treachery of liberal politicians in the Democratic Party.

If these comrades are serious in their belief that the Labor Party is a real factor in the U.S. in 1960??? then obviously the main conclusion of the Realignment resolution should be from their viewpoint "break with the two capitalist parties and form a third party - A Labor Party. But this is not the conclusion of the Realignment resolution and correctly so. How anyone in this day and age can state that the L.P. is a real factor because in some rare instance a union leader makes a speech in favor of independent political action is beyond me. This does not mean that it is impossible for the situation to change. But I'm a square. I thought long ago that we wrote resolutions on the basis of existing circumstances and not on wishful thinking or in propping up the images we have of ourselves as left-wingers. If the sponsors of this point of view want to be taken seriously, let them document this "Labor Party is a real factor now" bit. They have plenty of time to do so.

SP-SDF

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